

**REMARKS**

Claims 1-21, 23-29 and 31 are pending in this application. By this Amendment, claims 1, 2, 15-17, 28 and 29 are amended. Support for the amendments to the claims may be found, for example, in FIGS. 1 and 2, and in corresponding portions of the specification. No new matter is added. Reconsideration of the application based on the above amendments and the following remarks is respectfully requested.

The Office Action rejects claims 17-20, 29 and 31 under 35 U.S.C. §102(e) over JP-A-07-168507 to Yano. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Yano fails to disclose "wherein an upper surface of the developer replenishment box is an inclined surface such that the upper surface is parallel in cross-section to an inclined portion of the discharge tray, accommodating the recording sheets, when the developer replenishment box is in an inserted state," as recited in independent claim 17. Yano fails to disclose any structure which may reasonably be considered to correspond to a discharge tray in the manner recited in claim 17. Further, none of the other applied reference remedy this deficiency. For example, JP-A-11-193164 to Kimura et al. (hereinafter "Kimura") discloses discharging tray 9. However, no upper surface of any structure which may reasonably be considered to correspond to a developer replenishment box may reasonably be considered to be parallel in cross-section to any inclined portion of discharging tray 9.

For at least the above reasons, Yano does not disclose, and would not have suggested, the combinations of all the features recited in independent claim 17. Further, claims 18-20, 29 and 31, which depend from claim 17 are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by Yano for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features they recite.

The Office Action rejects claims 1-6, 9-16 and 23-28 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yano in view of Kimura. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding independent claims 1 and 15, none of the applied references disclose the recited "a developer storage space delimited by the space adapted to be displaced by the stored developer ... at least a portion of the developer storage space of the image forming section is arranged in an area which is surrounded by the inclination portion, a horizontal plane extended from the lower end of the inclination portion, and a vertical plane extended from the upper end of the inclination portion." The Office Action asserts that the Yano development container part 25 and reserve container part 28 correspond to the recited "developer storage space." However, Yano provides no indication that a developer storage space is arranged in a geometric area in the manner recited in each of claims 1 and 15. Further, Kimura fails to remedy this deficiency. Specifically, Kimura discloses process cartridge 13. Process cartridge 13 cannot reasonably be considered to be arranged within a geometric area in the manner set forth in claims 1 and 15. Specifically, process cartridge 13 is not located in such proximity to any structure which may reasonably be considered to correspond to the recited "inclination portion."

Regarding independent claims 2 and 16, neither Yano nor Kimura disclose "a developer storage space delimited by the space adapted to be displaced by stored developer ... at least a portion of a wall surface defining the developer storage space extends along the inclination portion." Yano fails to disclose any structure which may reasonably be considered to correspond to the recited "inclination portion." Further, Kimura fails to remedy this deficiency. Specifically, any structure disclosed in Kimura which may reasonably be considered to correspond to the recited "developer storage space" cannot reasonably be considered to be located in such proximity to any asserted inclination portion. Thus, neither Yano nor Kimura can reasonably be considered to teach, or to have suggested, the recited "at least a portion of a wall surface defining the developer storage space extends along the inclination portion."

For at least the above reasons, Yano and Kimura, in any permissible combination, do not disclose, and would not have suggested, the combinations of all of the features recited in independent claims 1, 2, 15 and 16. Further, claims 3-6 and 9-14, which variously depend from claims 1 and 2, are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the combination of Yano and Kimura for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Regarding claims 23-27, which depend from claim 17, none of the applied references disclose "wherein an upper surface of the developer replenishment box is an inclined surface such that the upper surface is parallel in cross-section to an inclined portion of the discharge tray, accommodating the recording sheets, when the developer replenishment box is in an inserted state," as recited in claim 17. Yano fails to disclose this feature for the reasons discussed above with regard to claim 17. Further, Kimura fails to remedy this deficiency for the reasons discussed above with regard to claim 17.

For at least the above reasons, Yano and Kimura, in any permissible combination, do not disclose, and would not have suggested, the combination of all of the features recited in independent claim 17. Thus, claims 23-27, which variously depend from claim 17, are also neither taught, nor would they have been suggested, by the combination of Yano and Kimura for at least the reasons discussed above, as well as for the additional features they recite.

Regarding claim 28, none of the applied references disclose the recited "wherein the developing housing and the developer replenishment box are disposed above a latent image writing position on the image carrying body." The Office Action asserts that Yano discloses a developing housing and a developer replenishment box communicatively connected to the developing housing. However, as shown, for example, in Fig. 5 of Yano, any structures which may reasonably be considered to correspond to the recited developing housing and developer replenishment box are not both disposed above a latent image writing position.

Rather, development container part 25 is disposed below any portion which may reasonably be considered to correspond to a latent image writing position. Further, Kimura fails to remedy the deficiency in Yano.

The Office Action rejects claims 7 and 21 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yano in view of Kimura and further in view of U.S. Patent No. 5,631,726 to Sawada. This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Regarding claim 7, which depends from claim 1, none of the applied references disclose "at least a portion of the developer storage space of the image forming section is arranged in an area which is surrounded by the inclination portion, a horizontal plane extended from the lower end of the inclination portion, and a vertical plane extended from the upper end of the inclination portion," as recited in claim 1. Yano and Kimura fail to disclose this feature for the reasons discussed above in regards to claim 1. Further, Sawada fails to remedy the deficiencies in Yano and Kimura.

Regarding claim 21, which depends from claim 17, none of the applied references disclose "wherein an upper surface of the developer replenishment box is an inclined surface such that the upper surface is parallel in cross-section to an inclined portion of the discharge tray, accommodating the recording sheets, when the developer replenishment box is in an inserted state," as recited in claim 17. Yano and Kimura fail to disclose this feature for reasons discussed above in regards to claim 17. Further, Sawada fails to remedy the deficiencies in Yano and Kimura.

The Office Action rejects claim 8 under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) over Yano in view of Kimura and further in view of Japanese Patent Publication No. JP10-181978 to Yasui et al. (hereinafter "Yasui"). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

None of the applied references disclose the recited "at least a portion of the developer storage space of the image forming section is arranged in an area which is surrounded by the

inclination portion, a horizontal plane extended from the lower end of the inclination portion, and a vertical plane extended from the upper end of the inclination portion," as recited in claim 1, from which claim 8 depends. Yano and Kimura fail to disclose this feature for reasons discussed above in regards to claim 1. Further, Yasui fails to remedy the deficiencies in Yano and Kimura.

Accordingly, reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejection of claims 1-21, 23-29 and 31 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, it is respectfully submitted that this application is in condition for allowance. Favorable reconsideration and prompt allowance of claims 1-21, 23-29 and 31 are earnestly solicited.

Should the Examiner believe that anything further would be desirable in order to place this application in even better condition for allowance, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned at the telephone number set forth below.

Respectfully submitted,



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Attachment:

Request for Continued Examination

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